



# Comprehensive Plan Amendment



## LAND DEVELOPMENT BROCHURE

May 6, 2003

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### What is a Comprehensive Plan Amendment?

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a concise statement of goals, general policies, and specific strategies for implementing the town's vision. This directly impacts the future development pattern in the Town of Blacksburg. The plan serves as a general guide for the citizens of Blacksburg, Town Council, the Planning Commission, and Town staff, including development and redevelopment in the town.

Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan are additions, deletions, or other alterations made to the existing document that are intended to strengthen the implementation of the Town's vision.

### Who Grants the Amendment?

Blacksburg Town Council is the only body with the authority to change or amend the Comprehensive Plan.

### What is the Process?

- Town Council has the authority to initiate an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan at any time during the year.
  - Amendment requests by Town committees or staff should be submitted to the Long Range Planning Committee by January 2<sup>nd</sup> of each year.
  - Citizens may submit requests to amend the Comprehensive Plan once per year during the month of December, except if within 12 months of a new plan's adoption. Request forms are available on-line at [www.blacksburg.gov](http://www.blacksburg.gov).
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1. Applicants shall schedule and attend a pre-application meeting with staff for no later than the second Friday of December.
  2. Amendment applications are compiled by staff and reviewed by the Long Range Planning Committee, a subcommittee of the Planning Commission.
  3. The Long Range Planning Committee determines which amendment requests will receive further consideration, staff analysis, and have public meetings scheduled.
  4. All requests recommended for consideration by the Long Range Committee are presented at a public meeting in January for comments. Neighborhood representatives are invited by invitation and the general public by advertisement in the newspaper.
  5. The Planning Commission receives the amendment requests to be considered on their February consent agenda, and schedules a March public hearing.
  6. The staff prepares a report on the amendment requests under consideration for the Long Range Committee's February meeting. The committee will recommend approval or denial of each request.
  7. The Planning Commission holds a public hearing on the amendment requests at their March meeting and recommends approval or denial of each request. These recommendations are forwarded to the Town Council.
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8. The Town Council receives the amendment requests and schedules a public hearing.
9. The Town Council holds a public hearing and acts on the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments by resolution.
10. If Council amends the plan, staff alters the on-line Comprehensive Plan in accordance with the change(s).

### **What is Considered during the Amendment Process**

For the Comprehensive Plan to be amended, one or more of the following criteria must be met:

- The request must be a creative idea or concept that will benefit the community and that was unforeseen during the planning process for the comprehensive plan.
- The subject property or concept was misinterpreted or overlooked in the comprehensive plan.
- Conditions have changed substantially since the last comprehensive plan update necessitating a change, such as changes in surrounding land use or economic conditions.
- An undue hardship exists substantially limiting the use of the subject property.
- The amendment will effectively aid in the implementation of the vision or goals of the comprehensive plan.

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### **What is required for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment Request?**

The following items shall be fulfilled with your request:

- ❑ A pre-application meeting with staff, scheduled by the applicant, to discuss the proposed amendment(s).
- ❑ A fee of \$300 is required. Checks or money orders should be payable to the Town of Blacksburg. No refunds will be granted, but a fee will not be charged if an application is withdrawn before January 1<sup>st</sup>.
- ❑ A letter detailing the amendment request. This letter should state why and how the request satisfies one or more of the five criteria listed under “What Is Considered During The Amendment Process.”
- ❑ Supplemental information that supports the Comprehensive Plan amendment request (Maps, data, text, research, reports, marketing information, sections of the existing Comprehensive Plan, etc.)
- ❑ Additional information may be requested by the Town to assist in determining if the amendment is warranted.

### **What is the applicant’s role in the Amendment Process?**

As the requestor you have several obligations:

- It is your role to schedule a pre-application meeting for no later than the second Friday in December.

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- It is your role to support your request. Citing a criteria doesn’t establish proof. Town staff will not serve as the advocate. Staff is present to provide an objective analysis based on the existing Comprehensive Plan and relevant Town Codes.
  - It is your role to cite and prove the claimed criteria, as well as to furnish all the necessary supporting documentation for your request.
  - It is your role to participate at the public meetings to explain the concept(s) and idea(s) driving your request, beginning with the application submission.

### **What if I don’t want to wait until December to make my request?**

Town staff only accepts amendment requests from citizens once a year during the month of December.

Any individual can approach Town Council during the *Public Address* portion of a Town Council meeting and request that Council initiate an amendment. Town Council may or may not take action on the speaker’s request to initiate the amendment process or may advise the speaker to submit their request in December.

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### **For more information contact:**

**Town of Blacksburg  
Planning and Engineering  
300 South Main Street  
Post Office Box 90003  
Blacksburg, VA 24062-9003  
phone: (540) 961-1126  
e-mail: [planningandengineering@  
blacksburg.gov](mailto:planningandengineering@blacksburg.gov)**